

Page 10, line 12, insert the following:

While the invention is susceptible of various modifications and alternative constructions, certain illustrated embodiments thereof have been shown in the drawings and will be described below in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intention to limit the invention to the specific forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, alternative constructions and equivalents falling within the spirit and scope of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS:

Rewrite claims 3, 5, 6-8, 10, 11, 15, 17-20, 23 and 24 as follows:

A1 3. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 1, characterised in that for each nip there is more than one recess (13), spaced axially along the gearwheel (2, 3, 20, 30).

A3 5. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 3, characterised in that the width of the recesses (13) in total is less than half the width of the gearwheel (2, 3, 20, 30).

6. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 1, characterised in that the cross-sections of the or each recess (13) are arranged to that the total maximum cross-section exceeds the volume of material that can fill the gear teeth.

7. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 1, characterised in that the cross-sections of the or each recess (13) are arranged to that the total maximum cross-section exceeds the volume of material that can fill the gear teeth.

8. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 1, characterised in that the feed inlet (24) feeds a single intake nip formed between the gear wheel (20, 30) and the casing wall, and the non-fed gearwheel (21, 31) allows entrained air to escape from a region of pressure buildup on the outlet side of the gear pump where the gearwheels (20, 21; 30, 31) mesh.

10. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 8, characterised in that an escape passage for gas or air is provided at a position on the circumference of the non-fed gearwheel (21, 31) between the pressure buildup region and the feed inlet (24).

11. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 8, characterised in that, at the pressure buildup region an edge of the outlet (25) defined by the casing part surrounding the non-fed gearwheel (21, 31) is provided with a projection extending towards or beyond a common tangent to the pitch circles of the gearwheels (20, 21; 30, 31).

A5 15. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 13, characterised in that the escape passage (78, 79) leads to the feed inlet (64) or to a separate escape outlet (85) formed in the casing.

A6 17. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 13, characterised in that the gearwheels (60, 61; 80, 81; 90, 91) are of unequal diameters, and the feed inlet (64, 84) leads to the nip of the larger gearwheel (60; 80; 90).

18. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 13, characterised in that one gearwheel (21) is co-axial with a screw extruder of the Transfervimix type, fed from the outlet (25) of the gear pump.

19. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 13, characterised in that the gear pump has an outlet (33) at right angles to the axes of the gearwheels (30, 31), and the outlet (33) leads to a Transfervimix extruder (38).

20. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 18, characterised in that the Transfervimix extruder comprises a stator component (41) with helical threads co-operating with a second component (42) with oppositely-handed helical threads.

A7 23. (Amended) An extruder according to claim 13, characterised in that each gearwheel is separately driven from shafts of a gearbox.